

# Section V

## Effects for Decisionmaking

Conservation effect information is collected and documented so the planner can provide information to the landuser so they can make an informed decision. The planner can organize effect information using the Conservation Effects for Decisionmaking (CED) framework. This framework encourages the conservationist to draw two pictures of the world: 1) A benchmark condition without conservation; and 2) the conditions that would be expected with conservation treatment. The scenarios are then used to identify the changes between the two conditions. By displaying both the advantages and the disadvantages, the conservationist can show what the conservation treatment means from the landowner's perspective.

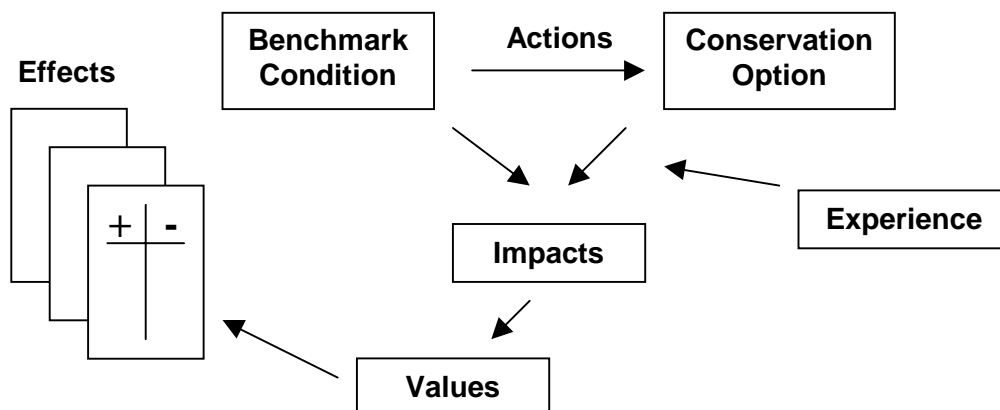
To be most useful, the effects information used in CED and contained in Section V must be factual, realistic, and practical. It may come from the planner's personal experience, from research and field trials, or (preferably)

from case studies of conservation applied on local farms.

CED is a process that helps landusers understand the effects of resource management systems on their own operation. The process helps the planner display the impacts of conservation options when compared to some benchmark condition. The "benchmark" is normally the current conditions as they exist on the decisionmaker's land.

Impacts may be rated by the decisionmaker as beneficial or adverse depending on his or her values. The amount of information given to the producer should be that amount that is enough to help him or her make a decision. Information will generally be provided as needed in a stepwise, hierarchical fashion with each step offering more detail, complexity or quantification until a point is reached where the decision maker receives sufficient information to make a informed decision.

### Conservation Effects for Decisionmaking



Central to collecting information to use in the CED process is follow-up and documentation of effects. What the conservation planner discovers during follow up will add to NRCS's experiences and knowledge base and should be put back into the CED process and Section V. Effects are to be recorded for each of the natural resources and other items relating to the decisionmaker's farm operations.

One way to assemble needed effect information is through the use of case studies. Case study information is recorded during the planning process and verified during follow up. Information from case studies should be shared between field offices to the extent possible and placed in Section V-B. This collection and improvement process will be a continuing activity that will gradually add to the total quality of Section V and the conservation plans that result from its use.

Implementation of CED will be assisted through the use of information displays regarding conservation options and through worksheets used to record the current "benchmark" conditions. A display of the conservation treatment option information should be prepared for each of the common or dominant resource situations and cropping sequences prevalent in a field office. The information assembled to document the effects of conservation options is compared to information regarding the decisionmaker's current of benchmark condition. Such information is captured during the planning process. The difference between the benchmark condition and a treatment option is the impact of installing that option and should serve as the basis for making a decision to install or reject an option.

*Note: File Conservation Effects for Decisionmaking examples following this section. Refer to FOTG Section III for RMS Guidesheets used in developing CED examples.*